The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

Herne the Hunter of Bowland forest in Lancashire

In the heart of Bowland Forest, shrouded in mystic whispers and ancient secrets, there dwelled a spirit known as Herne the Hunter. Once a revered keeper of the forest, Herne's existence transcended the boundaries of the physical and entered the realm of legend.

As winter descended upon the land, and the veil between worlds grew thin, Herne would emerge from the shadows. At the stroke of midnight, beneath the gnarled branches of an ancient oak, he would commence his nocturnal vigil. The moonlight bathed the forest in an ethereal glow, illuminating the majestic figure of Herne with his wild mane of hair and mighty antlered crown.

With a wave of his hand, Herne would unleash a tempestuous wind that tore through the trees, causing the oak to tremble and groan in protest. The very air crackled with energy as he invoked his power, commanding the forces of nature to his will.

It was said that Herne had dominion over the beasts of the forest. The cattle, once peaceful and docile, would succumb to his influence. Milch-kine, their udders heavy with nourishing milk, would yield blood instead, a sign of the supernatural powers at work. The villagers spoke in hushed whispers of the nightmarish transformation that overtook the animals under Herne's spell.

But it was not only his dominion over nature that struck fear into the hearts of those who dared to venture into the forest. Herne possessed a chain, wrought with the weight of countless souls lost to the forest's depths. When he shook it, the sound reverberated through the stillness, sending a bone-chilling shiver down the spine of any who heard it. It was a sound that echoed with the anguish and sorrow of those trapped between worlds.

The tale of Herne the Hunter had been passed down through generations, etching itself into the folklore of the land. The elderly, with their wise yet superstitious beliefs, whispered the legend to the younger ones, ensuring that the spirit of Herne would remain alive in the minds of the people.

For some, Herne was a fearsome entity, a symbol of the forest's untamed power and the consequences of disrespecting nature. Others regarded him with reverence, seeing in him a guardian of the wilderness, a deity cloaked in the skin of a hunter.

Yet, despite the tales and warnings, there were those who dared to seek out Herne, driven by curiosity or desperate yearnings. They ventured deep into Bowland Forest, their hearts pounding with anticipation and trepidation, hoping to catch a glimpse of the elusive spirit.

But Herne remained an enigma, forever elusive and untamed. He danced through the moonlit glades, his antlered silhouette disappearing among the trees, leaving behind only the echoes of his presence. To encounter Herne was to witness a fragment of the ancient magic that wove its threads through the fabric of the world.

And so, the legend of Herne the Hunter lived on, entwined with the very essence of Bowland Forest. As long as the trees whispered in the wind and the moon cast its silvery glow upon the land, the spirit of Herne would endure, a symbol of the mystical and untamed forces that lay hidden within the heart of nature itself.

By Donald Jay